

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MPOL MILI TO

SUBJECT: AARMA VISIT TO TOGOLESE PARA-COMMANDO CENTER AND
BATTALION CAMP

1. ON JULY 2 ASSISTANT ARMY ATTACHE (AARMA) VISITED TOGO'S
PARA-COMMANDO INSTRUCTION CENTER AT TOKOIN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
AND LATER SAME DAY, ACCOMPANIED BY DCM, VISITED PARA-COMMANDO
BATTALION AT CAMP TEMEDJA, NEAR ATAKPAME, SOME 160 KM NORTH OF
LOME. ARRANGEMENTS WERE MADE BY EMBASSY THROUGH CHIEF FRENCH
MILITARY ADVISOR TO ARMY STAFF, COMMANDANT DURBET, WHO OBTAINED
PERMISSION FROM PRESIDENT EYADEMA. ESCORT OFFICER ASSIGNED WAS
CAPT. AKAWIW WALLA, FORMER GENDARMERIE OFFICER NOW COMMANDING
INSTRUCTION CENTER AND BELIEVED TO BE FAIRLY CLOSE TO PRESIDENT.
DURING BOTH VISITS TOGOLESE OFFICERS WERE OPEN AND FRIENDLY,
ANSWERING ALL QUESTIONS ASKED IN STRAIGHTFORWARD MANNER. PROGRAM
WAS WELL ORGANIZED, AND AARMA WAS SHOWN AND BRIEFED ON ALL
ASIECTS OF UNITS. ON ARRIVAL AT TEMEDJA, AFTER HONORS AT GATE AND
RECEPTION BY ALL OFFICERS, AARMA AND DCM GIVEN LUNCHEON BY
BATTALION COMMANDER, MAJOR BONFOH (PRESIDENT EYADEMA'S BROTHER-
I -LAW) WITH ALL OFFICERS AND SEVERALWIVES. ATCLOSE OF VISIT,
IN OFFICERS' MESS, BONFOH GAVE CORDIAL SPEECH WHICH WAS INTER-
RUPTED ON TWO OCCASIONS BY SPONTANEOUS CHEERING FROM ASSEMBLED
OFFICERS AND NCO'S: FIRST WHEN HE REFERRED WARMLY TO TOGOLESE-
AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION, AND LATER WHEN HE EXPRESSED
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HOPE SOME TOGOLESE OFFICERS AND NCO'S COULD SOMEDAY VISIT US

MILITARY BASES. ANOTHER EVEN MORE VOCIFEROUS ROUND OF CHEERS CAME WHEN AARMA, IN SHORT SPEECH OF THANKS FOR WARM WELCOME AND SOUVENIR OF CAMP PRESENTED BY BONFOH, PINNED HIS OWN US PARATROOP WINGS ON BONFOH.

2. COMMENT: THIS WAS FIRST VISIT BY US DEFENSE ATTACHES TO TOGOLESE MILITARY UNITS IN SEVERAL YEARS. VISIT TO TEMEDJA WAS, HOWEVER, OFF-AGAIN, ON-AGAIN AFFAIR. DURBET FIRST TOLD DCM SEVERAL DAYS IN ADVANCE VISIT WAS ALL SET, THEN TOLD HIM BONFOH WAS MAKING DIFFICULTIES, EVEN THOUGH PRESIDENT HIMSELF HAD GIVEN APPROVAL. AT LAST MINUTE, DURBET PHONED EMBASSY TO SAY ALL WAS WELL. WARM RECEPTION AND WELL-ORGANIZED PROGRAM THAT FOLLOWED LEADS ONE TO BELIEVE PRESIDENT EYADEMA PLAYED STRONG ROLE IN INSURING SUCCESS OF VISIT, AND MAY WELL HAVE BEEN CAUSE OF BONFOH'S FINAL AGREEMENT. IN ANY EVENT, THERE SEEMED TO BE NOTHING FEIGNED ABOUT BONFOH AND FELLOW OFFICERS' PLEASURE AT VISIT FROM FELLOW PARATROOPER FROM US MILITARY. BOTH AARMA AND DCM FELT VISIT WAS GREAT SUCCESS. USDAO ABIDJAN'S IR'S TO FOLLOW. RAWLS

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